



**Alberta
Cattle
Commission**

GRASS routes

The Alberta Cattle Producer Monthly Update

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New Identification Agency Setting Up Technology Trials

The Canadian Cattle Identification Agency was started to ensure safety and health in the food supply through the intro-

duction of a national identification system for all cattle.

"The whole focus and priority of the agency is on tracing the individual animal to the herd of origin with a focus on traceback for disease, residues and physical contaminants," says agency General Manager Julie Stitt.

"We're trying to find tags that stay in the ear with a 95 per cent retention rate. We're also looking for something practical and affordable that can be read at the packing plant," says Stitt. Test herds are currently being identified.

Other trials will be carried out at the packing plant level. Work will continue on finding practical methods of transferring data about the animal from processing through to meat inspection.

The agency has its own board of directors representing the commercial and purebred cow/calf, veterinary, feedlot, auction market and packing plant sectors.

National Check-off Preparations

The major provincial cattle producer associations are working towards a **national check-off system to uniformly fund national beef promotion and research efforts**. A benefit of the national check-off is that it will apply to beef imports, which is not possible under current regulations.

The check-off fund will be directed to the Beef Information Centre for national promotion, the Canada Beef Export Federation for market development in foreign countries and to the Beef Cattle Research Council for research programs. In Alberta, \$1.00 of the \$1.50 provincial check-off will be re-directed to the national check-off. The remaining 50 cents will be used for Alberta beef programs.

Alberta and Ontario are ready to implement the national check-off while Saskatchewan, British Columbia and Manitoba are completing their arrangements.

The incentive to develop national identification is to maintain export market access.

Canada exports 53 per cent of its beef production. Stitt feels recent scares around the world with BSE, E-Coli and bovine Tuberculosis are important factors for putting the system in place.

Different tag technologies will be tested this year.

Korean Beef Sales Increase

A federal finance insurance program worth \$12 million will trigger a flurry of beef sales to South Korea. The Canada Beef Export Federation (CBEF) requested the federal finance insurance to help counter \$100 million in U.S. meat credits offered to the Koreans. CBEF expects the program will lead to beef sales equal to one-half of the total South Korean beef trade in 1997.

**Cattle Market
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Canadians Have Different Meal Preferences

Canadian consumers are quite different from their U.S. counterparts when it comes to preferences in meal preparation says research to understand the best way to help the Canadian food industry develop convenient everyday meals.

Canadians have less disposable income than Americans do, which means Canadians want cost effective solutions to the question "what's for dinner". It was also found

that Canadians are more willing to spend time at home cooking while Americans are more inclined to buy takeout meals.

As a result, the Beef Information Centre has worked with the food industry to develop easy, convenient beef meals to cater to today's consumer. Two of these products now available are Pillsbury's Create a Meal and Stouffer's beef stir-fry kits.

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